

total \$54,535,000, while express rose 10.9 per cent. Passenger fares were down \$226,000 or 4.1 per cent to \$5,312,000, while mail declined slightly and all other revenue account receded 11.6 per cent to \$2,552,000.

Tonnage of revenue freight carried was down 2.7 per cent at 12,285,000 against 12,628,000, while revenue tonnage mileage dropped by 3.1 per cent. The number of fare passengers aggregated 2,769,000 compared with 2,954,000 a year ago, a decline of 6.2 per cent, while the revenue passenger mileage fell 7.3 per cent. Empty freight car mileage registered a sharp increase over the preceding February, climbing 24.2 per cent, or some 12,660,000 miles, while loaded mileage declined six per cent.

Total pay roll advanced from \$33,952,000 to \$38,819,000 or 14.3 per cent, and the number of employees remained relatively unchanged.

**IRON AND STEEL PRODUCTION:** Canadian iron and steel production continued its upward climb during March, new monthly peaks being reached for pig iron and steel ingots.

Pig-iron output for the month amounted to 202,130 tons, sharply above last year's output of 172,675 tons, according to figures released by the Bureau of Statistics. Cumulative output for the first three months of this year was 557,928 tons, an increase of 74,088 tons over the comparable production of 483,840 tons in 1948. Ferro-alloy output in March also registered a sharp gain, totalling 22,457 tons as against 14,293 a year earlier, making the three-month production 66,101 tons compared with 43,241 tons for January-March last year.

Combined output of steel ingots and castings in March rose to a high level, aggregating 298,461 tons as compared with 286,026 tons last year. Production for the three months totalled 842,439 tons against 782,398 tons last year. Steel ingot output was recorded at 287,885 tons compared with 275,349 a year earlier, and for the three months 812,881 tons compared with 753,300. Steel castings in March fell to 10,576 tons from 10,677 tons last year, while the cumulative output for the first quarter increased to 29,558 tons from 29,008 tons a year ago.

**BORDER TRAFFIC:** Highway traffic crossing the international boundary into Canada during March was six per cent heavier than in the same month last year, according to the Bureau of Statistics. The increase was due to greater volume of Canadian traffic returning from the United States which rose 23 per cent. United States traffic entering Canada showed a minor decrease of less than one per cent.

First-quarter totals for this year place highway border crossings at 1,327,000, showing an advance of 12 per cent over the same period of 1948. As in March a large part of the rise was due to increased volume of returning Canadian traffic, up from 327,700 a year ago to 427,400.

**FARM PRICES:** The index number of farm prices of agricultural products continued its general downward trend in March, to reach its lowest level since May last year. The peak for this index was registered in August last year. At the March level, the index was 1.7 points below that of February, 12.9 points below August, but 3.6 points above May and 10.9 points higher than in March last year.

The index for March this year, on the base 1935-39, was 251.1 compared with 252.8 in February and 240.2 in March a year ago. As compared with the preceding month there were increases in provincial indexes for Alberta and British Columbia, but declines in the remaining provinces, while in the 12 months there were increases in all provinces except Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

Compared with a year ago, March prices were higher for all agricultural products included in the general index except grains, potatoes, vegetables and furs. Compared with the preceding month, the decline of 1.7 points was largely attributable to a lowering of prices for dairy products and poultry and eggs.

**WORLD GRAIN EXPORTS:** World exports of grain and grain products during the first half of the current crop season were nearly five per cent greater than in the corresponding period of the previous (1947-48) season, totalling 17,938,600 long tons (in grain equivalent) as against 17,110,000 long tons.

Approximately 73 per cent of this season's first-half total consisted of breadgrains, namely wheat, including flour, and rye. Exports of these amounted to 13.1 million tons compared with 12.6 million tons in the first half of the 1947-48 year, according to the Bureau's monthly review of the wheat situation. Shipments from the United States accounted for 55.6 per cent of the breadgrain total compared with 55 per cent the previous year. Canada supplied 21.1 per cent against 23.8 per cent; Australia, 12.9 compared with six per cent; Argentina, 4.2 (10.9); and all other countries, 6.2 (4.3) per cent.

**COST OF LIVING:** Cost-of-living indexes for four of the eight regional cities recorded increases during March, two were unchanged and two moved lower, according to the Bureau of Statistics. Further recessions in food prices, notably butter, were counter-balanced by increases in clothing, home furnishings and services, miscellaneous items and rentals.

**WHEAT STOCKS:** Stocks of Canadian wheat in store or in transit in North America at midnight on May 5 amounted to 113,300,000 bushels, down 5,231,000 from the preceding week's total, but 43,884,000 higher than on the corresponding date last year, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

**MARGARINE PRODUCTION:** Margarine production in Canada during the first four months of this year amounted to 18,069,000 pounds, according to the Bureau of Statistics which is now collecting figures on this product monthly. Output in January was 1,030,000 pounds, February 3,354,000, March 7,331,000, and April, 6,354,000.

Stocks of margarine held by manufacturers, and in cold storages and other warehouses at the beginning of May amounted to 948,000 pounds.

Production and stocks in Newfoundland are not included in the above totals, but will be shown when administrative arrangements for the collection of statistical data from that province have been completed.

**LABOUR INCOME:** Canadian labour income in February is estimated at \$605,000,000, down \$3,000,000 from January, but up \$56,000,000 or 11 per cent from the estimate for February 1948, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

Increases in labour income from January to February occurred in manufacturing, transportation, communication and storage, finance and fishing. These increases, however, were overbalanced by decreases in all other industries.

Average weekly earnings for the nine leading non-agricultural industries increased from \$42.77 on February 1 to \$43.05 on March 1. Over the same period, however, employment in these industries showed a decrease which overbalanced the effect of higher average earnings upon labour income. The all-Canada cost-of-living index dropped one-fifth of one per cent from 159.5 on February 1 to 159.2 on March 1.

**RCAF APPOINTMENT:** Air Commodore F.R. Miller, CBE, formerly Air Officer Commanding the RCAF's Air Materiel Command, is to become Air Member for Operations and Training at Air Force Headquarters, Ottawa, it was announced on May 20, by the Minister of National Defence, Mr. Claxton. Air Commodore Miller, at present in Washington, D.C., where he is attached to the Canadian Joint Staff, takes over his new duties September 1, with the rank of Air Vice Marshal.

A/C Miller will take over as head of the Operations and Training Division from Air Vice Marshal C.R. Slemon, CB, CBE, who becomes Air Officer Commanding, Central Air Command, Trenton, Ont., upon the retirement of Air Vice Marshal E.E. Middleton, CBE.

**POLISH VETERANS:** The Minister of Labour, Mr. Mitchell, reported on May 19 that at least 250 of the Polish veterans who came to Canada in 1946 and 1947 for jobs on farms were now either operating farms for themselves or had well-laid plans for doing so in the future.

Approximately 80 of these men were in Ontario, with the remainder established in every province with the exception of Newfoundland.

Some of them had purchased their own acreage, while others had rented land or were operating farms on a crop-sharing basis.

**PUREBREDS FOR ITALY:** One hundred and twenty-five purebred Canadian Holstein-Friesian heifers will be leaving Montreal May 21 on the S.S. Marchport, bound for Italy, the Department of Trade and Commerce announced on May 18.

This order for Canadian Holstein-Friesian cattle was placed by Italian breeders, following smaller token shipments over the past six months.

In November, 1948, four Holstein-Friesian bulls, valued at \$15,000, were flown to Italy via New York, marking the first shipment of Canadian purebred cattle to that country. In March of this year, an additional eleven head of cattle were flown from Malton to Italy, the first such air shipment direct from Canada to Europe.

Italian breeders have expressed great satisfaction with Canadian purebred Holstein-Friesian cattle, and it is expected that further orders will be placed in this country.

**FOREST PRODUCTS RESEARCH:** Formation of an Advisory Committee on Forest Products Research to work closely with the Forest Products Laboratory, Ottawa, in the investigation of methods of wood utilization was announced on May 19 by the Minister of Mines and Resources, Mr. Gibson.

Members of the Committee, representing various branches of the forest products industry, will make their experience and advice available in regard to work being carried out at the Laboratory, and suggest new lines of research in wood utilization.

**RETAIL SALES HIGHER:** Canadians stepped up their spending in retail stores in March, making purchases to the value of \$577,730,000 or six per cent more than in March last year, according to the monthly estimate by the Bureau of Statistics. The total was well ahead of both January and February when the respective figures were \$493,370,000 and \$469,520,000.

Aggregate dollar sales for the first quarter of this year stood at \$1,540,620,000 compared with \$1,482,410,000 in the same period of 1948, a gain of four per cent.

**DEPARTMENT STORE SALES:** Department store sales advanced 27 per cent during the week ending May 7 over the corresponding week last year, according to preliminary figures issued by the Bureau of Statistics. Largest gain of 33 per cent was shown in Ontario, followed by Alberta with a rise of 31 per cent, the Maritimes 28 per cent, Manitoba 27 per cent, Quebec 23 per cent, British Columbia 22 per cent, and Saskatchewan 16 per cent.